IMPROVING PASTURELAND FOR WILDLIFE

BIOLOGY JOB SHEET TX - 20

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Monocultures of any plant type, be it grass, crops, or trees are generally poor wildlife habitat. A pastureland type of plant community lacks the needed kinds and abundance of cover types for some animal species, tends to restrict the movement and foraging ability of some species, and reduces the availability of suitable forages for some species.

To improve wildlife habitat on pastureland yet still provide for substantial productivity for grazing and hay, the following alternative treatments are suggested.

TO PROTECT OR PROVIDE COVER

A. When clearing land

1. Leave at least a 100 foot width of trees and shrubs along perennial or intermittent streams and dry drains.
2. Leave enough well distributed trees and shrubs in strips, blocks, or motts to provide a 20 to 30% canopy per acre.
3. Clear for an irregular shaped pasture rather than a square or rectangular shaped pasture.

B. When scattered trees and no shrub understory occur in the pasture.

1. Do not mow within the dripline of the overstory trees.
2. Do not use herbicides within the dripline.
3. Do not apply fertilizer within the dripline.
4. Protect developing woody cover from fire.
5. Protect developing woody cover from livestock loafing by practicing planned grazing or by fencing.

C. When there is no tree or shrub cover in a pasture.

1. Plant bare root seedlings of oak and yaupon to begin woody cover formation.
2. Construct mini fences for bird perches to begin a natural regeneration of woody cover.
3. Construct post tee pees. Place to get 5 to 7 motts per acre.
4. Protect beginning woody cover from grazing, haying, mowing, fire, and herbicides.

D. When no tall grass cover occurs in the pasture.

1. Exclude continuous livestock grazing along disked strips, woodlines, drainages, and fences to promote the establishment or recovery of tall grasses.
2. On these areas, discontinue the application of fertilizer, lime, and herbicides that encourage introduced sod forming grasses.
3. On these areas, plant adapted tall grasses if needed.
4. Mow these areas as needed to suppress woody shrubs and trees.

TO REDUCE HERBACEOUS PLANT DENSITIES

A. Disk along fencelines, around motts, along wooded drainageways, and along wooded edges. Avoid disking erodible areas.
B. Concentrate livestock grazing with feed, salt, or minerals in selected nonerosive areas for short time periods.
C. Do not fertilize these disked or livestock disturbed areas if upland bird habitat is desired.
D. Avoid herbicide use on these disked or livestock disturbed areas.

TO INCREASE FORAGES FOR WILDLIFE

A. Disk around woodlines, fencelines, and woody motts to encourage native forb production.
B. Overseed pastures with cool season grasses and legumes (white clover, arrowleaf clover, crimson clover, vetch, oats, wheat, rye, etc.).
C. Plant warm and cool season food plots along woody edges, fencelines, and around brush motts. Do not fertilize if upland game birds are desired.
D. Fertilize shrubs and vines (Japanese honeysuckle, American beautyberry, ratan, Virginia creeper, peppervine, sumac, greenbriar, etc.) that occur along woody edges.

ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL REFERENCES

The following biology job sheets may be used to provide additional technical information for improving pastureland for wildlife.

Disking for Upland Birds	TX-8
Quail Habitat Management	TX-6, TX-7, TX-14
Annual Wildlife Food Plots	TX-17

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